

**Board of Directors  
Conference Call  
May 20, 2014**

**In Attendance:** T. Christian Miller, Ellen Gabler, David Cay Johnston, Matt Goldberg, Rob Cribb, Len Downie Jr., Mc Nelly Torres, Andy Donohue, Stuart Watson, Josh Meyer, Ziva Branstetter, Manny Garcia, Sara Cohen

**Staff in Attendance:** Mark Horvit, Heather Feldmann-Henry, Amy Johnston

Johnston calls the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

**Previous Minute:**

Torres motions to approve minutes.

Gabler seconds the motion. Unanimously approved.

**Executive Director's Report:**

**Membership**

- Membership is likely to end at or over 5,000 this month. This has happened the last several months, a significant increase over the past several years. The last few years Gannett has purchased bulk memberships but didn't this year. We maintained the membership numbers despite that.

**Conference**

- Registration reached 600 as of today.
- We have a large room block and it sold out. Stephanie has been able to find
- It is shaping up to be a large event.
- Fundraising went really well. Mark Katches and Matt Goldberg have been a big help. Final numbers will be announced at the conference.
- The schedule is online. Speaker names are not yet attached to each session but will be added very soon.

**Conference Highlights**

- The showcase panel on government surveillance is coming together. The latest addition is former New York Times editor Jill Abramson. We also have a number of high-profile sessions organized by volunteers, including a whistleblower session with Daniel Ellsberg, a session on stories spiked by media companies, a special track for college students, and much more.
- Any board member who wants to be a mentor and hasn't signed up can contact Amy.

Miller asked if there is a technology track. Horvit replied that there isn't a specific track, but there are a number of panels that are tech-focused and use speakers from the region with expertise. Sessions are being offered by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Twitter, Google and more.

**Election Update**

Horvit said he did not want to discuss too many details of the election because several of those on the call are candidates. He listed a few key developments:

- Cohen, who headed up the election committee, is not going to be involved in making decisions about this election because she is running.
- Voting will open on June 9 and will close the evening of Sat. June 28.
- We are considering holding some kind of online forum for candidates. (Note: This idea was shelved with the agreement of non-candidate board members in a follow up email).
- While all voting is electronic this year, candidates will still be nominated at the membership meeting and will deliver short speeches. Afterward, the two hands-on computer labs will be opened as polling places for those without smart phones, tablets or laptops.
- We went with Big Pulse for the electronic voting. With this company every member will receive an email notice with a link to vote. They can then vote. They will not have to sign-in to cast their vote, but once this link is used, they cannot vote again.
- People will not be able to go back in and change their vote once it has been cast.

Horvit said staff has created an online list of frequently asked questions to walk members through the new process. A discussion of various details of the election ensued. In summary, several emails will be sent to members with the link to vote (that can only be used once); new members who join after June 6 will still be able to vote until the day before the election; new candidates can join the ballot through June 26, but those who have already voted won't be able to amend their ballot.

Discussion ensued about whether to allow members to change their votes after their ballots have been cast. Horvit said staff did not support this for a number of reasons and noted that in a typical election, you can't get your ballot back and change it once it's submitted. Board members agreed but said it should be clear that ballots cannot be changed once they are submitted; Horvit said that will be included in the online instructions.

As the final part of his report, Horvit mentioned that he would be doing training in Nigeria the first week of June.

### **Budget:**

Horvit presented the first draft of the proposed budget. After today's discussion, any requested changes will be made and the budget will be presented for further discussion and a vote at the June board meeting.

He went through the budget, explaining various line items. IRE has several strong financial years, and we are increasing some revenue projections for 2015 based on those trends. The new budget will include money for a new staff position; the exact position hasn't been determined, as we are evaluating needs.

He noted that certain departments, like the Resource Center, appear to lose money, but that it's misleading because the Center drives membership revenue, which appears in a different part of the budget.

He pointed out that income in the Data Library has dropped over the past few years and said that a proposal from data library Director Liz Lucas on making changes in the library's operation will be presented at the June board meeting.

Downie asked how the INN/IRE data partnership works. Horvit said that Denise Malan, who works for INN and is embedded with IRE's data library, helps with some IRE training. IRE staff provide assistance, data and other help. Horvit said the relationship is mutually beneficially and is good outreach for IRE.

Horvit said conference fundraising and revenue has increased, thanks to larger attendance numbers at both the IRE and CAR conferences. This year in particular, the CAR conference generated more revenue than usual (it has not traditionally been a big revenue generator). He cautioned that the large attendance numbers should not be counted on to continue, and said the 2015 budget's increases are more modest.

He said the DocumentCloud budget will be updated at the June meeting. IRE is awaiting word on a pending Knight Foundation grant that will make a major difference.

Donohue said that the budget sets the table for larger discussions at the June meeting, from staffing to the data library. He also noted that board members have discussed trying to reduce the workload on the executive director. Horvit noted that many IRE staff have taken on increased workload as our attendance and membership numbers have grown.

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.